**American Foundation for the Blind**
**Application to the National Endowment for the Humanities**
**Preservation and Access: Humanities Collections and Resources**
**Helen Keller Archives Digitization Project**

**Narrative**

## 1. Significance

- **Nature, Size, and Intellectual Content of the Collection; Digital Selection Criteria**

The Helen Keller Archives span the years from 1886 until 1980. Helen Keller bequeathed her extensive, personal archives to AFB upon her death in 1968. This collection is the legacy of a unique life. Helen Keller was famous from the age of 6 until her death at the age of 87. Every aspect of her long, rich life was documented. The collection is comprised of approximately eighty thousand items (corresponding to more than 160,000 digital pages), representing 146 cubic feet of processed material. The processed collection includes 97 cubic feet of documents -- legal contracts; handwritten, typed, and brailled correspondence; memoranda; speeches; reports; flyers; and manuscripts. There are 25.5 cubic feet of photographic prints and negatives, including 18 photo albums; and 23.5 cubic feet of scrapbooks and news clippings. Other materials (unprocessed) include audio recordings, film, and more than 250 artifacts. Helen Keller's bequest also includes her personal library of 283 volumes.

We intend ultimately to digitize the entire collection; the most efficient and economical method is to select entire series and subseries for digitization (see Methodology section below). Selection criteria for the first phase of digitization are as follows: 1) items most frequently requested by researchers and the general public; 2) items with inherent historical significance and greatest potential for future requests; 3) items that are in good physical condition, including legibility of text (materials that are fragile and require longer digitization times, e.g. press clippings, will be digitized under alternative funding).

The greatest number of research inquiries to the Helen Keller Archives from scholars and researchers relates to Helen Keller's written work, such as speeches, articles, and correspondence. We have chosen the following series and subseries for digitization under this NEH grant:

Series 1: General Correspondence
- Subseries 1: Legal and Administrative
- Subseries 2: Advocacy and Work
- Subseries 3: Individuals
- Subseries 4: Media and Entertainment
- Subseries 5: Commemorations
- Subseries 6: Select Subjects

Series 2: Writing by and about Helen Keller

We plan to seek further funding for digitization of the following series and subseries not included above: Series 1, Subseries 7: General Public and Organizations; Series 3: Oversize Print Material; Series 4: Press Clippings; Series 5: Scrapbooks; Series 6: Architectural Plans; Series 7: Photographs and photograph albums; Series 8: Artifacts; Series 9: Audio Recordings; Series 10: Film.

Series 1 and 2 form the intellectual heart of the Helen Keller Archives. The Archives contain original typescripts (Helen Keller typed her own first drafts) with revisions and final versions of her books and essays as well as correspondence and telegrams to and from over 2,000 individuals. Subjects include: her youth; writing; advocacy for those with visual impairments; politics; women's issues; religion; arts and culture. Examples of items in these series are as follows:

*Youth*

Helen Keller was born in 1880 into a prosperous family in Tuscumbia, Alabama. The history of her childhood – her becoming deaf, blind and unable to speak at the age of 19 months as a result of illness and her battle to conquer her disabilities and subsequent success in the face of adversity-- have become the stuff of legend as well as standard educational material for generations of school children worldwide.

Helen Keller's life was inextricably woven with that of her teacher Anne Sullivan Macy. Macy (1866-1936) was born into a poor working class family in Massachusetts and endured a harsh childhood. At the age of 14 she was admitted to the Perkins School for the Blind and became a teacher. On March 3, 1887 she was sent to Tuscumbia to work as a governess for 6 year old Helen Keller. Her work with Helen Keller became a model for teaching in the field of blindness and provides an early example of enlightened education using the Montessori Method. Macy communicated her anxieties and teaching successes to her confidante Sophia Hopkins and the man who appointed her to the job – Michael Anagnos, Director of the Perkins School for the Blind. The Archives contain six letters between Hopkins and Macy from this period and 81 original and typed copies between her and Anagnos. A particularly interesting group of items are letters Helen Keller wrote in pencil in her square block handwriting, including a page of practice words that she wrote in June 1887, just three months after Macy's arrival to Tuscumbia. (see Appendix Sample of Young Helen's Writing)

The subject of Helen Keller's authorship and to what extent she voiced her own opinions as a young woman is a question frequently asked by researchers. A letter contained in the Archives from Alexander Graham Bell to Helen Keller dated 1908 encourages her to voice her opinions in writing and is one of 10 letters (originals and copies) between the scientist and young woman. In 1891, Helen Keller was accused of plagiarizing a children's book entitled *The Frost King*. Both Bell and Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) vociferously defended Helen Keller against the charge. Twain's letter of 1903 revisits this issue (see www.afb.org/braillebug/hktwain.asp). Clemens was a good friend and huge admirer of both Helen Keller and Anne Macy Sullivan and the Archives contain seven original letters from Clemens to Helen Keller and four from her to him.

*Writing*

Helen Keller's passport lists her profession as "author." Helen Keller's writing spans from 1900 – essays she wrote as an undergraduate student at Radcliffe College (with professor's remarks) – to 1956, with an article published in *Guideposts*, entitled "*My Luminous Universe*." During those intervening decades she wrote 14 books, draft manuscripts of which are in the Archives. In addition, over 475 speeches and essays on topics such as faith, animals, rehabilitation, blindness prevention, birth control, philosophy, and atomic energy are all contained in the collection.

Doubleday & Co. published many of Helen Keller's literary works. Correspondence with them from both Helen Keller and John A. Macy (Helen's early literary agent) spans over 50 years – from 1902 until 1957. Materials include a 1902 typed and multi-page Memorandum of Agreement between Helen Keller, Anne Sullivan Macy, John A. Macy and Doubleday regarding the publication of Helen Keller's early autobiography, *The Story of My Life*. The Doubleday correspondence includes 19 letters from Walter H. Page, eminent journalist, editor and diplomat, and 18 letters to and from Frank N. Doubleday. The Archives also contain relevant correspondence between Helen Keller and her German publisher during the rise of Nazi Germany, and a passionately worded open letter that she wrote to the student body of Germany denouncing the burning of her books by students in Berlin in May, 1933.

*Advocacy for those with visual impairments*

Helen Keller spent over half a century fighting for the rights of those with visual impairments both at home and abroad. An extraordinary range of primary source documents detailing this work are contained in the Archives. An early example includes a typed, annotated draft of a letter written in 1906 to Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) concerning the first meeting of the New York Association for Adult Blind.

Helen Keller expresses her excitement that the meeting is taking place and her disappointment that she is unable to attend. The letter contains a rallying cry to assist those who are blind and was read aloud by Clemens, who chaired the meeting. Clemens subsequently reprinted the letter in his book *Mark Twain's Autobiography*.

Helen Keller spent a lifetime fundraising for programs on behalf of those with visual impairments. The collection contains her letters of solicitation and other correspondence with some of America's wealthiest industrialists such as Andrew and Louise Carnegie, Henry Ford, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. These materials provide excellent source material on late nineteenth and twentieth century fundraising activities and philanthropists.

Members of legislative and judicial branches of government sought her presence and counsel. Documents confirm that her personal appearance in Washington D.C. was sought to ensure the ratification of legislation on behalf of those with visual impairments. Speeches, telegrams, and correspondence span from 1905 to 1961 and detail her work with both state and federal agencies to demand appropriations and enact laws benefiting those with disabilities. Examples include draft letters to senators lobbying for their support for Federal Library Services for the Blind (Talking Books, e.g. books recorded on Long Playing records for the use of people with vision loss) in 1930 and a speech in the House of Representatives investigating aid to those with disabilities in New York, including a special plea for African-American blind and deaf-blind individuals (1944).

Helen Keller corresponded with seven United States Presidents from Calvin Coolidge to Lyndon B. Johnson, advocating on behalf of those with disabilities. The Archives contain ten original letters from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Helen Keller and three original letters from her to him. The Roosevelt-Keller correspondence spans from 1929 to 1936. These letters discuss the Talking Book project which became a WPA project under the Roosevelt administration (in large part due to Helen Keller's strong support), as well as Helen Keller's efforts for legislation to allow blind persons to run newsstands in federal buildings.

Helen Keller traveled to 39 countries around the globe in her efforts to effect change. Items to be digitized under this grant include itineraries and correspondence with foreign governments, blindness organizations, and international leaders in the blindness field spanning from 1937 to 1957. In particular, Helen Keller's affinity for Japan and its people is well documented. In 1948, Helen Keller visited Japan as a Goodwill Ambassador following the devastation caused by the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Her trip was sponsored in part by the U.S. Army under General Douglas MacArthur. Up to two million people lined the streets and came to hear her speak. The Archives contain many items from this visit, including: a letter she wrote to Nella Braddy Henney in which she describes the horrors of war; a map of the devastation caused by the atomic bomb on Hiroshima; and numerous scroll texts written in Kanji and Katakana welcoming her to Nagasaki as an emissary for peace.

*Politics*

Helen Keller was a socialist and a pacifist. The Archives contain an array of primary source documents resulting from her political affiliations and activities. These materials are frequently requested by scholars of political history. Examples include membership cards to the Socialist Party of America (1911, 1912); an anti-war address she gave in 1916 to the British, French, and Belgian Permanent Blind Relief Fund in New York; a letter marked "not sent" written in 1917 to President Woodrow Wilson, demanding the release of incarcerated socialists; and correspondence with the anarchist Eugene Debs and his brother Theodore Debs, spanning from 1913 to 1922, including a letter from Debs to Helen Keller, written in prison.

*Women's issues*

Helen Keller corresponded with key female figures of the twentieth century on the subjects of female suffrage, birth control, and women's rights. Examples include a letter from Emma Goldman, written in 1916, in which she praises Helen Keller for a speech she heard Helen Keller give at Carnegie Hall in New York City; a letter from Pearl S. Buck to Helen Keller regarding the peril facing women due to the rise of fascism (1940); and a letter from Margaret Sanger regarding birth control efforts in India (1953).

Other primary sources include drafts of speeches demanding social equality for women (1913-1916), and the typescript of an article she wrote in 1914 for the Kansas City Star in which she advocated educating pregnant syphilitic women on the benefits of medical treatment to prevent infant blindness.

*Religion*
Helen Keller's Swedenborgian religion was key to her philosophical outlook on life. The Archives contain typed extracts from a manuscript of her book *My Religion*, in which she explains her faith. A key early figure in Helen Keller's life was John Hitz, the secretary to Alexander Graham Bell at the Volta Bureau. Hitz taught Helen Keller about the Swedenborgian religion. Their correspondence (1896-1900) contains many examples of discussions of their faith. Other materials include a speech Helen Keller gave entitled "Swedenborg's Message of Comfort," for those mourning dead soldiers in the aftermath of war (1919), and correspondence with the Swedenborg Foundation (1919-1961). The Archives contain a letter from Helen Keller's brother Phillips Brooks Keller written in 1964 to Winifred Corbally, Helen Keller's companion/nurse, in which he requests that a Presbyterian Minister, not an official of the Swedenborg church, officiate at Helen Keller's funeral.

*Arts and Culture*
Helen Keller loved music, art, literature, and theatre. The Archives include correspondence with eminent cultural figures such as the literary critic Alexander Woollcott, the writer Thomas Mann, the sculptor Jo Davidson, the humorist Will Rogers, and the actor Laurence Olivier. The Archives also contain wonderful descriptions of how she experienced the world around her. Examples include: a letter to John A. Macy in which she describes feeling vibrations in her ear on being sung to by an opera singer (1914); a letter she wrote from Japan to AFB President M. C. Migel, in which she describes being the first woman to ever touch the Great Buddha in Nara (1937); a letter to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. describing a classical concert at Radio City Music Hall in New York City (1934); and a letter written in 1943 to a good friend, Claire Heineman, in which she describes attending a production of Othello on Broadway, and her admiration for Paul Robeson's portrayal of the lead character.

A lesser known aspect of Helen Keller's career was her work as a performer. Scholars of film and theatre history, as well as writers of historical fiction, frequently refer to the 58 folders contained in Series 1, Subseries 4: Media and Entertainment. Files include transcripts of the movie *Deliverance* (1918) which starred both Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan Macy. Few people know that before AFB gave Helen Keller a dignified platform from which to do her work, she and Macy appeared in Vaudeville shows in the 1920s; this subseries includes files on this subject, as well as documents surrounding the production of the documentary *Helen Keller in Her Story*, which won the Academy Award™ for Best Documentary Feature Film in 1955. (Among the artifacts in the Archives is the Oscar presented to Helen Keller.)

- **Relationship to Similar Collections**

The Helen Keller Archival collection is one of three significant archival collections at AFB. The other collections are the Talking Book Archives and the American Foundation for the Blind Archives. Under a grant from the Carnegie Foundation, the Talking Book Archives was arranged, described and re-housed and a selection of documents and photographs were digitized and can be viewed in the searchable, online finding aid at www.afb.org/ead.asp?EADID=19. An example of digitized items can be viewed at www.afb.org/ead.asp?EADID=19&nEADSeriesID=10&nEADSubSeriesID=32. The Talking Book digitization project has informed our knowledge on how to proceed with digitizing the Helen Keller

collection. We look forward to eventually processing AFB's institutional archives, which served as the primary source for the social history of blindness in the United States, *The Unseen Minority*, published in 1976.

AFB's is the foremost archive of Helen Keller material. Materials also exist at Perkins School for the Blind, Smith College, Radcliffe College, and the Alexander Graham Bell School for the Deaf (formerly known as the Volta Bureau). A collection belonging to Helen Keller Worldwide which was housed at their offices in the World Trade Center was destroyed on September 11, 2001.

AFB has consulted with the Perkins School for the Blind and Smith College, two institutions with important holdings on Helen Keller. The Perkins School for the Blind has materials used by Anne Sullivan Macy's biographer, Nella Braddy Henney; these are accessible to the general public and have finding aids. Smith College houses the collection of Nancy Hamilton, a filmmaker who directed the film *Helen Keller in Her Story*. There is a finding aid to the collection, and a few excerpts from the 125 film reels in the collection can be viewed. These collections are concerned with specific aspects of Helen Keller's life. In comparison, AFB's holdings provide documentation of every period of her life.

Our collection includes photocopies from other record repositories around the country that maintain Helen Keller materials (such as the University of California at Berkeley, Hadley School for the Blind, and Princeton University). Our EAD makes reference to these additional collections thereby providing a complete source of information on Helen Keller materials. Ultimately, we would seek collaboration to make more materials related to Helen Keller available and accessible on the Internet. As this project progresses, AFB will communicate with these other archives to let them know about our current project and determine if our experience can be of assistance to them in developing an EAD with digital images that is also accessible to people with vision loss.

- **Present Level of Intellectual Description; The Physical Condition of the Materials; and Their Storage Conditions**

AFB has organized, preserved, and described the Helen Keller Archives. The collection is described at the series and folder level in a finding aid that was created using Extensible Markup Language (xml), the format for Encoded Archival Description. The Helen Keller finding aid that AFB created complies with both the EAD and MARC tagging standards. The result is an inventory that resides on AFB's public web site (www.afb.org/ead/eadmain.asp) that conforms to current best practices for online inventories and is able to be used by people who are blind or visually impaired, as well as people with other disabilities. The finding aid resides on AFB's public web site (www.afb.org/ead) and is delivered via an ASP page with the XML transformation done on the server. The authority files that were created for subject, place, and type of material conform to the standards set by the Library of Congress and the Getty Research Institute.

According to a survey conducted in 2000 by the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA), most of the material is in good condition. About one percent of the materials have faded text, bleed-through, or stains. Materials are kept in a temperature controlled archival storage facility that was renovated for the purpose of housing the 289 manuscript boxes, 95 horizontal archival boxes, 250 artifacts, and other materials contained in the Archives.

- **Use of the Collection**

This project is AFB's next step in making the materials available to a wider audience. AFB has placed on its web site a small sampling of photographs (www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=1&TopicID=194), documents (www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=1&TopicID=193), and film (www.afb.org/annesullivan/asmgallery.asp?FrameID=101 and www.afb.org/braillebug/hkgallery.asp?frameid=42) culled from the Helen Keller Archives. Because of

the large number of primary and secondary school children who request information about Helen Keller through our toll-free information line, email, and regular mail we have developed the online Helen Keller Kids Museum, (www.afb.org/braillebug/hkmuseum.asp) used by both sighted and visually impaired children to research and prepare reports on the life of Helen Keller. These web areas have been so popular with visitors throughout the world, that we later created a web area dedicated to Helen Keller's teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy (www.afb.org/annesullivan). All of these web areas are fully accessible to people with vision loss. In 2007, AFB's web site at www.afb.org had more than 2.7 million visitors, and more than 4 million pages relating to Helen Keller were viewed. The Helen Keller finding aid, an area directed toward scholars, was visited more than 10,000 times in 2007.

Interest in Helen Keller continues to be strong. On June 27, 2005, the 125th anniversary of Helen Keller's birthday, articles about her appeared in newspapers across America, including the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*. A large online audience for information about Helen Keller demonstrates a strong current public interest -- a search for the term "Helen Keller" on Google results in over three million matches. In 2005, Helen Keller was voted one of America's top 100 greatest individuals in a poll conducted by the Discovery Channel, and in October 2006, she was inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame.

In March of this year, the rediscovery of a photograph of Helen Keller as a young child holding a doll, seated outdoors next to Anne Sullivan Macy, drew incredible press coverage in both America and the United Kingdom. There was an increase in the number of Helen Keller searches to AFB's web site, and the archivist received many more email and telephone inquiries. Fascination with Helen Keller and her teacher remains very high.

The wealth and richness of the primary source materials draw researchers to the collection. Two notable examples include Joseph P. Lash who wrote *Helen and Teacher* (1980) and Dorothy Hermann who wrote *Helen Keller: A Life* (1999). Kim Nielsen, a historian of disabilities and women's studies, used AFB's Helen Keller Archives extensively in her research to publish *The Radical Lives of Helen Keller* in 2004 and *Helen Keller: Selected Writings*, in 2005, the latter published by New York University Press in conjunction with AFB Press. In 2003, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum borrowed materials related to Helen Keller's reaction to her books being burned in Germany in the 1930s.

As an international icon, Helen Keller's collection is of great interest to an unusually wide audience, including scholars, the general public, and school children. Currently, the only way to gain access to primary source material on Helen Keller's life (other than the small portion of the Archives that is currently available on AFB's web site) is to personally visit the Archives in New York City or have a request answered by the archivist. Approximately 70 researchers per year visit the Archives by appointment or write to us to have information sent to them. Having to visit the Archives in person limits access for many who would benefit from the documents contained in the collection.

This project will make a significant portion of the Helen Keller Archives available on our web site. This will have a positive impact both on users of the Archives and on staff who work with users. Because the collection is currently accessible only at the folder level, a researcher must contact AFB either by email, phone, or letter and request that folders be retrieved. The AFB staff member then must check to see if these folders contain relevant information; if so, the researcher must wait up to 2 weeks to receive photocopies of requested items, if not, the researcher must start over. Once the collection is digitized, researchers will be able to pinpoint specific items and receive images immediately via the web. Not only will this greatly speed up the process for the researcher, it may also increase general use of the collection. Many researchers and members of the general public, especially school children, cannot afford to travel to AFB's offices in New York City, or pay AFB for research services. Digitization will remove these obstacles to access. In addition, availability on our web site will afford users the opportunity to obtain

higher quality images as their needs require. Because digitization will free up valuable staff time, better assistance can then be given to those researchers who visit or contact us. Another highly beneficial outcome of the project is reduced handling of the materials, thereby helping to preserve the physical collection.

- **Significance to People with Vision Loss and Other Disabilities**

Helen Keller bequeathed her papers to AFB with the hope and expectation that they would assist in continuing her important work. It is essential that we afford independent access to researchers and members of the general public who will perhaps derive the most joy and benefit from her life -- those who are blind or visually impaired.

A *Research Study Commissioned by Microsoft Corporation and Conducted by Forrester Research, Inc*. in 2003 found fully 16% (27.4 million) of adults under 65 years have "a mild visual difficulty or impairment," who reported they benefit from the ability to enlarge text, and 11% (18.5 million) fit the "severe" category, needing additional accessibility. Focusing only on computer users, the corresponding numbers are: 17% (21.9 million) and 9% (11.1 million).[1]

Digitized documents that include a text version of the contents are the best mode of creating accessibility. They allow readers with vision loss to utilize computer software created to decode online material. In order to view web pages, computer users who are blind or visually impaired often use software known generically as assistive technology. Some use screen readers which provide sophisticated speech or braille output and a somewhat modified interface to both software and web pages. Examples include JAWS and Window-Eyes software. Others use screen magnification software which enlarges the text and images on the screen and often provides speech output. Examples include ZoomText and MAGic software. Still others, especially those with a fair amount of usable vision, do not use assistive technology but instead rely on alternative operating systems and browser settings that come with standard software to make text more readable.

Significant additional work (described in the Methodology section) is involved in preparing items to be read with adapted software. By digitizing documents and including OCR translations and typed transcription, as well as the option for viewing enlarged images, we uphold the letter and the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We allow blind researchers the same opportunity to review materials on their own time schedules, and allow them to make their own selections of what is important to them. It frees them from being dependent on readers or other aides who inevitably, if unwittingly, inject their own interests if just by emphasis in the reading or by overlooking particular documents they do not find interesting.

Individuals who are not visually impaired will also benefit from the ability to enlarge the images or use speech output software to review the Archives, particularly people with learning disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language.

We intend that this project will demonstrate to any organization planning to digitize documents and make them available online how easily they can include and empower people with vision loss and by so doing, comply with federal laws governing accessibility, particularly for those receiving federal funding.

## 2. History, Scope, and Duration

- **History of Grants**

[1] (www.microsoft.com/enable/research/agingpop.aspx)

Intellectual control of the archives began immediately after Helen Keller's death in 1968 when the archivist at that time arranged the materials into folders alphabetically by subject matter and accessioned privately donated items into the collection. The archives were first made available to researchers during the 1970s.

A 1997 grant of $30,000 from The New York Times Foundation enabled AFB to place a selection of approximately one hundred letters, articles, and speeches about and by Helen Keller on our web site. Grants from AT&T and Pitney Bowes totaling $50,000 funded the creation of the multi-media Helen Keller's Kids' Museum.

In 2000, AFB received an additional $30,000 grant from The New York Times Foundation to commission a Preservation and Conservation Survey by the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA). It was concluded that greater physical and intellectual control over the Helen Keller Archives was necessary.

The next major step was obtaining a grant in 2003 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) in the amount of $90,000 to arrange, describe and re-house the collection. This project was undertaken using standard archival practices for arrangement and description as delineated in the 1990 Society of American Archivists manual, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*, by Fredric M. Miller. As part of the project, standard Library of Congress and Getty Research Institute authority files were created for people, subjects, places, and types of material featured in the collection. The finding aid is indexed as a MARC record in World Cat and OCLC databases which are disseminated to libraries and academic institutions worldwide. Under the NHPRC grant we processed and preserved 31.5 cubic feet of papers and documents, 17 cubic feet of prints and negatives including 18 photo albums, and 15 cubic feet of scrapbooks and news clippings. AFB contributed $162,000 to this effort and processed an additional 82.5 cubic feet of materials and purchased new archival shelving to house the newly processed collection. Fulfilling NHPRC grant requirements, we created on AFB's web site a finding aid in Encoded Archival Description that complies with Encoded Archival Description Document Type Definition Version 2002 used by the Society of American Archivists and the Library of Congress. In addition, this EAD was made fully accessible to blind and visually impaired users.

In 2005, under a $50,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, AFB arranged and preserved its Talking Book Archives, and digitized a selection of 2,000 documents. We also received a 2007 grant for $20,000 from the New York Times Foundation to create a web site about the history of Talking Books with these materials (www.afb.org/section.asp?sectionID=69). An important component of the Talking Book Project was the design and implementation of a robust and flexible web application to develop guides to our archival collections, hereafter referred to as AFB's EAD Web Application Software. Having this web application now in place will greatly facilitate our updating of the Helen Keller finding aid for the current project. As a result of having gone through the process of digitizing approximately 2,000 documents, we gained substantial knowledge of digital standards and procedures.

- **AFB Resources Available to this Project**

The Helen Keller Digitization Project will be supported by the following AFB resources:

*Archival Resources*

The Helen Keller Archives group, consisting of a permanent archivist and part-time Administrative Assistant, will be the primary resource for the digitization project. A full-time Archival Assistant will be hired for the two-year grant period, and an additional Archival Assistant will be hired for six months in the second year to focus on metadata.

The Helen Keller Archives group is part of AFB's Information Center, which is also responsible for AFB's other historical archives and for the M.C. Migel Library--the world's largest collection of books and other materials on blindness, dating from the 17th through the 21st century. The Archives are housed in a secure, 360 square-foot, temperature controlled room with movable shelving and flat-files for accommodating over-sized materials. Since 2002, the Archives have been under the direction of Helen Selsdon, who manages day-to-day preservation and access and has planned and implemented special projects, including the NHPRC Helen Keller Archives project and the Carnegie Foundation Talking Book digitization project. Selsdon's hands-on knowledge of the Helen Keller materials makes her a primary resource for researchers and scholars from around the world. She is also proficient in the development of accessible Encoded Archival Description, a skill that combines her archival expertise with a commitment to making the Archives truly accessible to blind and visually impaired people.

In 2007, AFB's Board of Trustees reaffirmed the organization's long-term commitment to ensuring the physical and intellectual integrity of the Helen Keller Archives through the provision of a secure, climate-controlled space to adequately accommodate and preserve the physical collection, including maintenance of a disaster management plan; access to the Archives for scholars, researchers, and other qualified individuals and development of a comprehensive web archival area for public use; and staffing by a professional trained and experienced curator for preservation and access purposes

*Web Resources*

The Web Operations department will provide technical support to the project, including programming oversight for customization of the EAD Web Application Software and design and development of the public user interface for access to the digital images online. Web Operations oversees all public web site development and maintenance for the organization. AFB contracts with AT&T for enterprise hosting services to ensure the reliability and speed of network connections, servers, applications, network-based backup and storage, security, and facilities. AFB's web site is currently supported by three dedicated servers at the AT&T hosting station that maintain mission-critical and content-rich web applications, including SQL databases and e-commerce. In addition to overseeing the hosting contract, Web Operations staff works with external web design and application vendors as needed to develop new web areas, integrating applications into AFB's accessible content management system. AFB has an ongoing relationship with The Daily-E Corporation, which maintains a separate AFB development web site for posting and testing of new applications and content. Web Operations staff comprises five full-time specialists: two technical programmers/administrators, a web content manager, a web coordinator, and the director, Crista Earl, who is widely recognized in the visual impairment field for her expertise in building accessible, content-rich web sites. Web Operations staff members develop and enhance their skills through ongoing professional training and attendance at industry conferences, where they are frequently presenters on web accessibility issues. Web staff was instrumental in the development of the existing web-based Helen Keller and Talking Book finding aid created in Encoded Archival Description, participating in a three-day training seminar and, subsequently, developing the first fully accessible EAD application at both the public display and administrative data entry levels

*Information Systems*

Information Systems (IS) staff includes four Information Technology specialists, and provides support to staff for all hardware and software requirements including backup and storage (both on site and remote). This department will be responsible for acquiring, configuring, backup, and off-site storage of the USB storage devices containing the digital images. AFB is committed to continually refreshing, updating, and revising digital equipment, including adoption of new file formats and display options to keep up with advances in electronic storage of documents and images.

*AFB Consulting*

AFB Consulting works with commercial, governmental, and non-profit organizations to maximize the accessibility and usability of their products, services, web sites, and intranets for people with disabilities, and has developed a methodology for assessing the accessibility of individual web sites. AFB Consulting will work with the Helen Keller digitization project to test accessibility and usability of the administrative tools and public display areas.

## 3. Methodology and Standards

- **Methodology**

We plan to digitize 40,000 documents or approximately 81,000 digital pages under this proposal. Because our goal is to digitize the complete collection (estimated at more than 160,000 digital pages), we have chosen to digitize entire series or subseries in the order they are arranged in our Archives, rather than selecting at the item level. This method is supported by a 2003 paper by the National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH)[2] which finds that automatic selection processes for digitizing collections are easier and less expensive than choosing to digitize only selected items in a collection. The administration that is required to oversee the selection, sequencing, scanning, and overall administration of the project will be more economical and efficient when taking one complete pass through the entire set of selected series and subseries rather than undertaking the task in smaller segments.

The existing Helen Keller finding aid, described under the "History of Grants" section above, was created before AFB developed its EAD Web Application Software. A new EAD will be created using the EAD Web Application Software based on the bibliographic structure of the existing Helen Keller finding aid. Working with the Helen Keller records within the EAD Web Application Software will ease the process of entering and editing metadata as well as adding transcriptions and other access features.

We have chosen the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) as our vendor to conduct the digitization work. Scanning will take place on site at AFB's New York office and all material processing and preparation will be done by AFB staff, under the direction of the archivist.

- **Testing**

We will test the digitization process and procedures by completing a cycle of preprocessing, digitization, and post-processing for Series 1, Subseries 1, Boxes 1 and 2. This will be accomplished in the first three months of the grant period and will let us identify problems and revise procedures as necessary.

- **Preprocessing**

The preprocessing process includes: retrieving archival boxes in the order in which they will be digitized; removing clips from documents; checking that items are in the correct chronological or alphabetical order in the folder and reordering them if necessary; checking the order of folders against the existing Helen Keller finding aid and reordering if necessary; taking documents out of Mylar; selecting the best copy of items for which there are multiples; removing items needing special scanning methods and inserting placeholders.

OCLC will install two flatbed scanners and a digital camera in a dedicated space in AFB's Information Center. Different equipment will be used based on the requirement of the item being digitized (e.g., size, binding, fragility). OCLC will use a Fujitsu flatbed scanner set to scan to NARA color bar guidelines and subsequently adjusted in Photoshop, and a Nikon D300 digital camera with copy stand using a 60mm

[2] Maria Bonn Economies of Scale: Lessons Learned from the Making of America IV Project. *University of Michigan.* Reproduced in National Initiative For A Networked Cultural Heritage. Symposium: April 8, 2003, New York City: Price of Digitization: New Cost Models for Cultural and Educational Institutions. Report by Lorna Hughes, New York University.

micro lens. OCLC will also use the following additional equipment as needed: a Phase One H25 pr P30 on Hasselblad camera; small vacuum board on the copy stand; photographic lighting to illuminate the materials; and PCs and Monitors. OCLC uses color bars Q13 and Q14 as well as the Gretag-Macbeth mini-checker and RIT resolution targets. All imaging is done to the guidelines outlined in the NARA digitizing standards document.

- **Digitization/Capture**

The project will produce multiple digital versions for each item, including a TIFF file, JPEG file, ASCII text file, and thumbnail derivative.

OCLC will assign a unique document number to each image at the point of digitization. The unique document number will be based on the bibliographic structure created for the existing Helen Keller finding aid. All TIFF images will be tagged as follows: AABBCCCDDEEEEEE_yyy.tif, where AA refers to a series code, BB a subseries code (where applicable), CCC represents a Box code, DD represents a Folder code, EEEEEE represents an item code and yyy is a page sequence number. AFB has set high-level minimum baseline standards for digitization. Preservation-quality digital masters will be created by OCLC with 400ppi resolution in TIFF format, the current accepted archival standard. Images will have 24-bit color depth. All TIFF images will be cropped to page edge (unless otherwise indicated) and de-skewed to within 2%.

- **Quality Control**

Quality control measures provided by our digitization vendor include: 100% manual review of scanned images; 100% review of image cleanup (including cropping, de-skewing, and sharpening) with manual corrections as required; 10% random final quality assurance checks by a supervisor of all images.

AFB Project staff will conduct separate quality assurance procedures at regularly scheduled intervals during the digitization process. Samples of digitized items will be tested for accuracy of textual and visual content; color balance of the digitized image; skewed images; flaws in the image that are not in the original; legibility of digital copies; filename accuracy. The archivist will be responsible for quality control processes according to the Library of Congress best practices and standards.

- **Post-processing**

Post-processing by AFB staff will include: reattaching clips; inserting documents in Mylar; re-filing documents; placing archival boxes back in the archives room.

Digitized documents will be delivered to us on multiple portable hard drives. One set of hard drives will be stored offsite in our Huntington, West Virginia Technology Center; the other will be kept in our New York City office. Master images will be kept intact on the hard drive for archival purposes. Research, web, and other daily use will be limited to the derivative file format images.

- **EAD Web Application Software Development**

Under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to arrange, describe and make accessible AFB's Talking Book Archives, AFB developed a web-based program to create and edit finding aids in Encoded Archival Description (See Administrator's samples in Appendix). This web based application is accessible on the administrative side to people with vision loss and allows the creation of an on-line finding aid that is also accessible.

The program is designed to reflect the hierarchical structure of an archival collection. As such it can do the following:

- create hierarchical groupings of items reflecting the intellectual order of the collection (such as subseries within series, or series within record groups)
- create hierarchical groupings of items reflecting the physical arrangement of the collection (such as folders within boxes)
- develop and edit (common) fields for each item
- add new records, including edit and delete functions
- add metadata to each record
- develop standard titles for each record using flexible algorithms to join together selected fields within each record to form the title
- add Front Matter text in XML
- add visual and audio items
- manipulate how the information is displayed in both the administrative area and the area viewed by the general public.

Under an NEH grant, an outside computer programmer will undertake the following tasks:

- Modify and test the EAD Web Application Software to accommodate the bibliographic structure of the existing Helen Keller finding aid and add new metadata such as digital images and OCR

- Populate the updated system with current Helen Keller finding aid content at the series, subseries, box, and folder levels

- Program the application to map digital items to their corresponding item-level record in the EAD. The numbering system, which will be added electronically to the EAD structure, will create a place for each digital item to reside within the EAD.

- **Metadata Creation**

The EAD Web Application Software currently includes "fixed" fields such as Item Name, Auto-Name Type, Item Date, Full Image ID, Thumbnail Image ID, Series, Subseries, and Folder. New meta-tagging fields will be created and validated for the existing Helen Keller finding aid. Metadata may include the following: Type, Date, Creator, Recipient, Subject person and Subject Choice. Metadata will also include unique numbers for items and item-pages. These will be automatically imported into the EAD along with the image and ASCII text.

Digitized images will be imported into the updated finding aid and we will perform quality control testing to ensure that this effort results in individual items being placed correctly with their associated metadata. Item level metadata will be created for the entire collection and existing metadata access points for people, subjects, places and document types will be expanded. Accessible transcripts will be provided for handwritten documents.

- **Development of Public Interface**

AFB will create the design specifications for a public interface using the digitized images and the design will be implemented on AFB's web site. The web site will include the digitized Helen Keller images, as well as OCR translations and typed transcriptions of documents.

AFB's EAD Web Application Software allows a great deal of flexibility and can display archival data in many formats; at the present time, EADs displayed on our web site are coded in XML, and an XSLT stylesheet is used to control the display of each finding aid.

The public interface will include an option to enlarge images, so that detail can more easily be viewed by people with low vision. Digitized images can be enlarged and examined without losing clarity, an opportunity for all potential users, but of particular value for users with reduced vision.

Public dissemination of the digital images of the Helen Keller Archives will use nationally recommended image file formats derived from the TIFF images, typically JPEG2000 images. The images and site as a whole will be tested for usability and accessibility.

In order to make the on-line Archives fully accessible to people with vision loss we will, at a minimum, include Optical Character Recognition (OCR) translation of the text of each image, and will create typed transcriptions of the most commonly requested handwritten documents and those popular typewritten documents that result in poor OCR translation. After the online archive is posted, we will provide on an ongoing basis, a full typed transcription in electronic format for any visitor who reports that access to a particular item using the OCR translation is not adequate for their purposes. As these on-request transcriptions are created, we will attach them to their associated image in the EAD, supplementing the existing OCR version. This will ensure that, over time, all popular images will include an adequate text equivalent.

- **Standards**

AFB adheres to the guidelines established by the Digital Library Federation, the National Archives and Records Administration, and the Library of Congress as they relate to 'best practices' for the creation of digital objects from analog source materials. Based on their excellent reputation for adhering to these guidelines and standards, we have chosen OCLC to perform the digitization work.

To make the documents accessible to people with vision loss, AFB will generate standard ASCII text files via Optical Character Recognition software (OCR). OCR will be concurrent with the digitization process on those original documents which are in typed format.

The Helen Keller Archives are described in an electronic finding aid that conforms with Encoded Archival Description Document Type Definition Version 2002 used by the Society of American Archivists and the Library of Congress. The online EAD for the Helen Keller Archives uses authority files derived from Library of Congress name and subject headings and the Art and Architecture Thesaurus of the Getty Research Institute. These authority files are metadata access points (for example, people: Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano), 1882 – 1945; Sanger, Margaret, 1879 – 1966 and subjects: Legislation -- United States – History; Publishers and publishing -- United States). Scholars searching online library catalogs such as the WorldCat database will find matches that will then lead them to the Helen Keller Archives.

We are choosing Dublin Core as our basic metadata schema as it closely matches the descriptive needs of the items to be digitized in our collection (such as letters, contracts, manuscripts, telegrams, and legal agreements) and because it has "evolved as a de facto standard for simple cross-discipline metadata"[3]. Examples of Dublin Core elements that we plan to use are: Creator, Date, Description, Subject, Title, and Type. In instances where Dublin Core does not meet our metadata needs, we will use other metadata schemas such as VRA Core 4.0 as well as our own elements and we will make sure that our metadata records are structured as XML data and can be validated using XML.

- **Accessibility for people who are blind or visually impaired**

Users of the on-line archives, including those with vision loss, will have full access to the extensive metadata that we will make available on the EAD.

[3] Open Archives Initiative (OAI) Frequently Asked Questions. Protocol Version 2.0 of 2002-06-14

Designers of web pages often inadvertently create barriers to users of assistive technology or to users with low vision who do not use assistive technology. These barriers include such things as using color alone to indicate sections of a page, failing to correctly label forms, or using images without text labels (alt tags), descriptions, or transcription. For certain individuals with low vision, it can be challenging to read web materials that are composed in unusual or decorous typefaces. Accessible web sites allow users to select the text and transform it into a font of their choosing, usually sans serif type fonts such as Arial.

AFB's web site can attest to our extensive in-house expertise in the area of digitization of print materials in a form that is a recognized model of accessibility for all, including people who are blind or visually impaired. AFB's web site meets the highest level of W3C standards of accessibility (www.w3.org/WAI/guid-tech.html).

AFB's staff in the areas of Web, Technology, and Information Systems assure that all software applications and other technologies we use or create are fully usable by all staff and visitors. Where necessary we create adaptations and test for usability. When we performed usage testing of the EAD Web Application Software that was created by AFB staff, we made sure to include blind and visually impaired users who routinely use the most popular assistive technology programs. We adhere to the "A," or highest, level of the web content guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative (www.w3.org/WAI/guid-tech.html), and also validate against the W3C Markup Validation Service Version 0.6.7 (validator.w3.org/check).

AFB's web department consistently reviews how best to optimize its visibility on the internet, including search engine optimization, and continually keeps abreast of search engine technology.

- **Intellectual Property Issues**

At her death in 1968, Helen Keller bequeathed her personal collection of documents, photographs, artifacts, and books to the American Foundation for the Blind, along with the copyright in her published works for "the general use of said Foundation, absolutely." In the instances where AFB does not own the copyright to letters and materials in the collection, such as letters written to Helen Keller by others, the institutions or individuals owning copyright to these materials will be contacted and permission will be sought to publish these items on the web. Because there will be instances where we are not able to ascertain the copyright, AFB will include a statement on its web site encouraging visitors to contact us with any known copyright information.

## 4. Work Plan

| | | Year 1 2009-2010 | | | | Year 2 2010-2011 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Digitization Cycle** | **May Ju July** | **Aug Sep Oct** | **Nov Dec Jan** | **Feb Mar Apr** | **May Ju July** | **Aug Sep Oct** | **Nov Dec Jan** | **Feb Mar Apr** | **Staff Responsible** |
| **TESTING** | Preprocessing | x | | | | | | | | HS/AA/DB |
| **Series 1, Subseries 1, boxes 1 and 2** | Digitization including OCR | x | | | | | | | | OCLC |
| | Quality Control | xx | | | | | | | | HS/JP/AA/DB |
| | Post-processing | x | | | | | | | | HS/AA |
| **DIGITIZATION** | Preprocessing | xx | xxx | xx | | | | | | HS/AA/DB |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Digitize rest of Series 1, 110 boxes** | Digitization | | xxx | xxx | | | | | | OCLC |
| | Quality Control | | xx | xxx | x x | | | | | |
| | Post-processing | | xxx | xxx | xxx | xx | | | | HS/AA |
| **DIGITIZATION** | Preprocessing | | | x | x | | | | | HS/AA/DB |
| **Digitize Series 2, 22 boxes** | Digitization | | | | xx | | | | | OCLC |
| | Quality Control | | | | x | | | | | |
| | Post-processing | | | x | xxx | xxx | x | | | HS/AA |
| **EAD WEB APPLICATION SOFTWARE** | Modify and test EAD Software | | xx | | | | | | | Consultant |
| | Populate EAD Software with Helen Keller bibliographic structure | | | xx | | | | | | CE/ VT/ consul-tant |
| | Map digitized items to EAD | | | | x | xx | | | | HS/CE/VT |
| **METADATA CREATION** | Create /validate meta-tagging schema | x | xx | | | | | | | HS/CE |
| | Create accessible versions of handwritten items | | | | | xx | | | | HS/DB |
| | Create item level metadata | | | | xx | xxx | xxx | xxx | xx | AA/DB/HS |
| **CREATE EAD PUBLIC INTERFACE** | Create design specification | | | | | | x | | | CE/VT |
| | Implement design on afb.org | | | | | | | xxx | | CE/VT |
| | Usability & accessibility testing | | | | | | | | xx | all |

**Assumptions:**
OCLC 2 scanners @ 7 hrs/day =70 hours/week.; post-production is 2 weeks per batch
Each box contains on average 15 folders; 60 pages per folder

Scanning and processing will each take 90 seconds per document; refilling and image quality control will take at least twice as long
Quality Control of images happens immediately, re-filing will wait

**5. Staff**

*Project Director – Helen Selsdon, MA, Archivist* *75% time on project*

Selsdon will create guidelines for the meta-tagging of the enhanced Helen Keller EAD in conjunction with web staff and will supervise the Archival Assistants who will enter item level description into the upgraded system. Working with AFB Web Operations staff and a computer programming vendor, she will oversee the integration of the existing Helen Keller finding aid into AFB's EAD Web Application Software.

Selsdon will oversee implementation of quality control for the digitized items, as well as the OCR of the related text. She will coordinate the daily work of AFB's internal staff and the work of outside vendors and consultants to make sure that all tasks proceed smoothly and deadlines are met. Her tasks include working with the digitization vendor OCLC to ensure the smooth and efficient digitization of materials in-house at AFB's offices. This includes selecting and preparing materials for digitization, managing the flow of items to OCLC to maintain a consistent schedule and, where necessary, discussing with them how best to handle particularly fragile items. Selsdon will review the quality control performed by OCLC, and will perform in-house checks of digital images and transcription/OCR of the related text created by the vendor.

She will oversee the day-to-day work of the Archival Assistants, monitoring the rate of progress and the quality of work.

Selsdon will call upon advisors as necessary, in order to get their suggestions on development of the digital and archival structure, as well as the internal and external interface delivering the historical information.

*Archival Assistants – (to be hired)*

*First Archival Assistant 100% for two years;, Second Archival Assistant 100% for 6 months*

The first archival assistant will be responsible for the daily tasks of the project including preprocessing and post-processing of documents; quality checking of digital files under the supervision of the Project Director, and day-to-day liaison with OCLC personnel on site at AFB. In the second year, both Archival Assistants will be responsible for item level metadata entry into the updated Helen Keller EAD.

*Administrative Assistant – Dawn Bodrogi* *20% time on project*

Bodrogi will provide an additional level of quality control, spot checking the processes of the Archival Assistant and OCLC product, proofreading completed transcripts, and coordinating with the Archival Assistant on ensuring alignment of transcriptions with the items being digitized. She will assist the Project Director in development of meta-tagging.

*Director, Web Operations -- Crista Earl* *20% time on project*

After reviewing other models, Earl created the finding aid structure currently in use on the AFB web site and assured that it was suitable for blind and visually impaired users. Earl is considered internationally to be a top expert in the field of computer technology and accessibility for people with disabilities. Earl will ensure accessible design for this project and be a resource to the project team and computer consultant on technical EAD requirements.

*Technical Specialist--Vishal Talreja, MS* *30% time on project*

Talreja will report to Earl and will manage the work of the computer consultant in developing and integrating the Helen Keller finding aid with the EAD Web Application Software. He will be directly involved in building the public interface and testing for accessibility by blind and visually impaired users and general usability.

*Project Oversight – Jaclyn Packer, PhD, Director, AFB Information Center 20% time on project*
Dr. Packer will oversee the work of project staff to ensure the successful completion of the project. She will assume budgetary responsibilities and be responsible for the meeting projected timelines. She will be responsible for progress reports, and will assure smooth coordination between AFB departments. Dr. Packer oversees the AFB Information Center and Helen Keller Archives and attends national meetings of the Society for American Archivists in order to keep abreast of the latest trends in the field.

**6. Dissemination**
Through the powerful medium of visual history—samples delivered via our award-winning web site—audiences will learn about Helen Keller and the importance of accessible archives and presentations.

We expect to use the digitized documents as the first level of access to the physical Archives in New York, thus reducing wear and tear on the original, fragile documents. AFB will provide high resolution images on a fee basis, with liberal allowances for sliding scales as needed. Visiting researchers will receive access to a computer with Internet access and equipped with adaptive technology, should they require it.

Guidelines for creating accessible archives will be disseminated by AFB through publication on the Accessibility area of AFB's web site, already a leading resource for authoritative information and practical advice on meeting ADA and Section 508 requirements in the development of technology solutions. AFB is happy to share its fully accessible EAD Web Application Software with the archival community, including participating in conferences such as the Society of American Archivists and by submitting a paper about the project for publication in archival journals. Obtaining this grant will assist in disseminating the message of accessibility to future entities funded by NEH.

AFB will use its organization-wide capacity to promote the availability of the digitized Helen Keller documents to scholars in the fields of disability studies through presentations at conferences usually attended by staff, including our own Josephine L. Taylor Leadership Conference. In addition, traditional outreach will be achieved through public service messaging, press releases to the national and disability press, news announcements, blogs, and electronic discussion groups. In the public display, AFB will use terminology gleaned from our ongoing work of search optimization that is designed to respond to commonly used search terms and is expected to draw more public traffic to the site.

A MARC record for the Helen Keller Archives is currently indexed on the WorldCat and OCLC databases which are available to academic institutions worldwide. At the conclusion of this project, we will update the MARC record indicating that the collection contains a large number of digital images. In addition, we will register the collection on the Open Archives Initiative (http://www.openarchives.org/data/registerasprovider.html) allowing the content to be harvested by other networks which should enhance its use by researchers.

**7. Sustainability**
AFB has been committed to the preservation and dissemination of the Helen Keller Archives since it was bequeathed to AFB in 1968. This project will be maintained through:

- offsite storage of images
- editorial oversight by archivist
- Web Operations Department supporting electronic access to the materials

- migration of digitized images to new storage media as it becomes available

Once complete, the project will be sustained by AFB's annual support and existing endowment funds. As noted earlier, senior management and the Board of Trustees is committed to the long term preservation and access of the Helen Keller Archives. Support of the Archives is a key component of a major capital campaign in process for the next several years. A proposal has already been submitted to the Lions Foundation to digitize the more than 250 artifacts in the Helen Keller Archives. AFB has also identified several foundations including the Hilton Foundation and individuals (current donors who actually knew Helen Keller as children) who have expressed an interest in our digitization project and we will approach them for funding the digitization of the balance of the Archives outside the scope of the NEH project.

This mission-based activity will continue with enhanced access after the NEH project. Specifically, the AFB archivist is responsible for answering internal and external research inquiries from scholars and will continue to provide reference on the collection once the NEH grant has ended.

AFB has a strong commitment to refreshing and updating digital files in the context of the entire AFB web site and IT department. We have a dedicated in-house staff that maintains and continually updates the web site, and stays abreast of changes in electronic standards of delivery though continued education, including attendance at conferences and though periodicals. AFB launched its first web site in 1995, and has continued to update it through its Web Operations Department. We therefore are prepared to commit ourselves to maintaining, updating, and preserving the digitized documents we create under this grant and fully understand the costs involved in doing so.

Digitization will provide significant new access to the Archives for everyone, but especially for those with vision loss. We are asking the National Endowment for the Humanities to partner with us in crafting this level of accessibility for the collection. We look forward to sharing the lessons learned in the process with other organizations interested in creating accessible web sites.